Bible Echo and Signs of the Times, vol. 6

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“Human Nature and Its Restraints” ***Bible Echo and Signs of the Times, 6, 15, 228, 229*****.**

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LET anyone compare the two pictures drawn by Paul, the one in *Romans 1:28-31*, of the iniquity of ancient heathenism, the other in *2 Timothy 3:1-8*, of the iniquity of the last days, even among those who have “a form of godliness,” and he will see that they are exactly alike. Human nature, unrestrained, is the same in all ages. Whether in the days of Christ, or two thousand years before, or two thousand years after; whether manifested in the habitants of Canaan, or in the inhabitants of the United States, it is always the same. It is for this very reason that the Bible fits men, wherever on the earth it may find them. It is a book not for one tribe only, nor for one class, nor for one nation, but for the human race. *And it is the only book in the world that is*. The reason for that is, that the book was given by One who knows human nature in its very essence.*BEST August 1, 1891, page 228.1*

God made man upright. But he turned from the bright course which God set before him; he sinned, and so sold himself to do evil; and not the sublime powers which the Lord bestowed upon him, to be exerted in the way of righteousness, are prostituted to evil; his “course is evil,” and his “force is not right.” If ever, then, man shall be raised from his fallen state, if ever his lapsed powers shall be restored, it is indispensable that the tendency of every faculty be restrained, turned into the right course, and trained to follow it. The Bible meets this necessity; it meets it in every part, and satisfies it to the full. Therefore, this of itself is proof that *the Creator of man is the Author of the Bible*.*BEST August 1, 1891, page 228.2*

Human nature being the same everywhere, the only thing that makes one person to differ from another *is the degree of restraint*

each one recognizes in his own case. If, in a person, all the restraints of the law of God are recognized, he will be a man fitted for the society and fellowship of the angels. If, on the contrary, none of these are recognized, he will be a man fit only for the society and fellowship of demons. Upon many persons, and in many ways, these restraints exert themselves unconsciously, as in the case of the infidel, who denies the authority or the existence of God, and despises his word. Yet the principles of that word are so imbedded in the society of which he is a member that he yields obedience to them, while he thinks he is defying them; but transplant him to the state of society which he advocates, where none of these principles are recognized, and none exerted, and he will run as readily in the way of iniquity as the veriest heathen that ever dwelt in the land of Canaan. And that other class of persons who call themselves "Christians", or even "Christian ministers," who, in their opposition to the obligations of the ten commandments, can hardly frame sentences that will sufficiently express the bitterness of their contempt for the law of God, only let the time come when such seed shall have borne its fruit, when society in following such teaching shall have reached that condition which would be defined in the very opposite of the ten commandments, and they will go as greedily in that evil way as did Balaam of old.*BEST August 1, 1891, page 228.3*

Again, many will restrain themselves from *doing* evil through fear of punishment; but take away the prospect of punishment, or satisfy them that there will be none, and they will go to any length that circumstances may allow. Henry VIII., although he regarded not God, as long as he feared the Pope did not dare to divorce his wife, but when he had broken through that restraint, he *cut off the heads of three wives*, and only a witty speech saved the head of the fourth.*BEST August 1, 1891, page 228.4*

There is another course by which men reach the same state of cruelty. That is, not by denying the existence of God, but by making themselves the depositaries of what they choose to define as his will, and then holding themselves as the sole expositors and executors of that will. As in every single instance it is only *their own will* which is thus exalted to the supremacy, and therefore is of only human authority, the only way in which it can be enforced is by

human enactment; and then instead of being simply executors, they make themselves *executioners* in carrying into effect their arbitrary will. Making their own will supreme, and themselves the sole interpreters of that will, even though they claim it to be the will of God, they just as veritably put themselves beyond restraint as do the men who deny God outright. Both classes reach the same point, and both commit the same enormous crimes, the one illustrated in the fearful orgies of the Reign of Terror, the other illustrated in the terrible torments of the Inquisition.*BEST August 1, 1891, page 228.5*

The Scriptures confirm all that this investigation suggests. In the beginning of this article we cited *Romans 1:28-31* as the description of the ancient heathendom, and *2 Timothy 3:1-8* as the description of the last days of modern Christendom, and we find them exactly alike. It is by resistance to the truth of God that men loosen its restraints upon them, and deliver themselves up to the sway of Satan. In the last days it is only those who "received not the *love of the truth* that they might be saved," in whom Satan works "with all power and signs and lying wonders." It is only those "who believe not the truth" but have "pleasure in unrighteousness," who become so deluded that they "believe a lie."*BEST August 1, 1891, page 228.6*